

THREE (10)
LETTERS,

Relating to the

South-Sea Company

AND THE

BANK.

The First written in *March* 1719-20.

The Second in *April* 1720.

The Third in *Septem.* 1720. now first publish'd.

By JAMES MILNER *Esq;*



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane,* and
A. DODD without *Temple-Bar.* 1720.
Price Sixpence.

LETTERS THREE

Relating to the

Ship-See Company

AND THE

BANK

The First of March in New York

The Second of April

The Third of May

BY JAMES M. WILKINSON

NEW YORK

1850

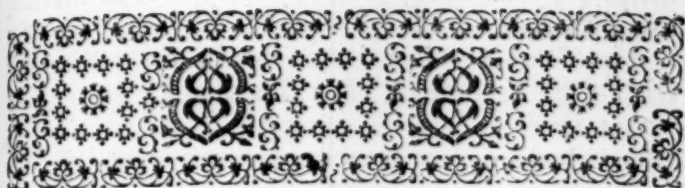


F

S



The
and
were
make
Nation
under
Th
always
of the
to th
could
Men
strip
there
see if
fel to



T H E
First LETTER.

London, Mar. 3. 1719.

S I R,



O U having desired of me an Account of Affairs here, since the first Motion was made for Proposals to pay off the Nation's Debts, I give it you as follows.

The *South-Sea* Company first started the Game, and having very good Friends in this City, we were in expectation what Proposals they would make to the Parliament, in order to discharge the Nation of the heavy Load of Debts they lay under.

The Bank having subsisted so many Years, and always been the Resource of the Treasury in times of the greatest Distress, thought themselves intitled to the Management of the Publick Moneys: they could not sit still and see a new upstart Society of Men in respect to them, start up on a sudden, and strip them of the Prize of the Publick Funds; and therefore summoned a General Court, in order to see if they could not appropriate that precious Morfel to themselves.

The Day was fixed, when both attended ; and their Proposals being printed, it appears in the following Light.

The *South-Sea* Gentlemen begin their Proposal with 'the Prelude of their Zeal, and Readiness to contribute to the reducing the National Debts ; God knows, no private Interest could induce them : and to that end they would advance Three Millions, Five Hundred Thousand Pounds *gratis*, for the Publick Service.'

The Bank, without any pretence of Zeal for the Publick Good, made a plain Proposal, which happening to be about Two Millions more than the *South-Sea*, the whole Current seemed to incline towards them.

But the *South-Sea* were not at all dismayed, tho they found themselves so far out-bid ; nor did they want Assurance (notwithstanding their Professions, that nothing but their great Zeal for the Publick, and to ease the Nation of the heavy Burden of their Debts, had engaged them to offer Three Millions and a half) to tell the Publick, ' That since they would not be babled by that Offer, and that the Bank had offered Five Millions and a Half, why truly they would give Four Millions above their first Offer : ' which being Two Millions more than the Bank offer'd, they reveng'd themselves on them for having offer'd Two Millions more than they. And for fear the Bank should leap Four Millions at once, as they had done, they still say, ' As they were the Society that made the first Offer, so they declared they were willing to do it on any Terms that any other Society should propose.'

But the Probity of those Gentlemen, who had really no separate Interests, and only the publick Interest in view, prevailed on them to think, that the Spirit which appeared in both Societies for the Publick

Publick
of their
by co
tho it
take a
lick-sp
In
that t
to the
not jo

Wh
there
the So
their
ill For

Up
two l
in her
Adve

I vi
was n
be T
Manfi
the w
went
there
nifice
gares
Hand
sand
at Tn

At
ing,
rious
these

I t
mily
I we

Publick Good, ought to be circumscribed, lest out of their great Zeal they should destroy one another, by coming up to Ten or Twelve Millions; which, tho it would be a great Ease to the Publick, would take away too great a part of the Gain of so Publick-spirited a Society.

In the prosecution of this Affair, all allowing that the *South-Sea* Proposal was the most beneficial to the Publick, there could be no Objection to the not joining issue with the best Offer.

When Affairs were come to this Determination, there was no room for any further Proposals; so the *South-Sea* Company were ravished with Joy for their Success, while the Bank were raving for their ill Fortune.

Upon this I resolv'd one Morning to make those two Ladies a Visit, and see how the one triumphed in her good Fortuue, and how the other bore her Adversity.

I visited the Lady of the *South-Sea* first, since she was now worth as many Millions as the other would be Thousands in a little time. When I entred her Mansion, nothing but Joy and Satisfaction run thro the whole Family from the highest to the lowest. I went directly to her Ladyship's Apartment, and there I saw her seated on her Throne in a most magnificent manner. On her Right Hand was, in Figures Capital, *Twenty-Seven Millions*; on her Left Hand was, *A Million Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand a Year Income*; and over her Head was, *Stock at Two Hundred per Cent. rising*.

At her Feet were the poor Annuitants in mourning, petitioning to be admitted Sharers in the glorious Harvest: But she spurned them from her with these words, *No long Annuities*.

I then went to the Lady *Bank*: The whole Family were in deep Mourning, and look'd dismally. I went to her Apartment, and found she had quit-
ted

ted her Throne, and sat at the Foot of it in deep Mourning. On her Right Hand was wrote, *Reduc'd to One Million Six Hundred Thousand Pounds*; on her Left Hand writ, *One poor Hundred Thousand Pounds Income*. Over her Head, in great Letters, REDUC'D, and (in small Letters) *to 20 per Cent.*

The Object was too melancholy to be entertaining, when I consider'd her former Glories, and how often I had seen her wallowing in her Millions, and her chief Servants, being twenty-six in number, come from the Treasury in a Morning, with a thousand Guineas a Man, and three thousand to the two Chief, to make up just thirty thousand amongst them. It gave me a melancholy Idea of the Vicissitude of human Affairs. And as I was retiring, I look'd into a little Parlour, where sat a parcel of her old Servants, who under her auspicious Reign had rais'd themselves to be worth two, three, and four Plumbs a Man. They were in private Discourse, and spoke so low, I could hear only some broken words, *Buy long Annuities, Lock up our Cash, Distress, Upstarts, Revenge and Ruin.*

I then saw their Malice and Envy at the fortunate Bargain their Sister had made; and at last they fell to downright quarrelling, complaining one of the other in most bitter Terms: *We could have given Ten Millions for this Bargain, and yet got more by it than the others at Seven Millions and a Half: Our Stock would have been at Two hundred and twenty, and perhaps Two hundred and fifty. O glorious Prospect! But it's gone, vanished, and past Retrieve.* And so I left the old Misers to lament their Condition.

I then began seriously to enter into the Consideration of this Affair, and how it stood in respect to the Publick; for the Joy of the one, and the Grief of the other, gave me no Idea of what Concern the Publick had in this Affair. I had only before me the
private

private Interest of each Company, which shewed it self in the different Passions of Success and Disappointment, natural to such Societies.

I then took their Scheme into Consideration, and found that the generous Principle of the *South-Sea*, in their Zeal for the Publick, in offering three Millions five hundred thousand Pounds at first word for the Service of the Publick, could never be enough applauded, had they not unluckily found out a Mistake to the prejudice of the Publick, of no less than four Millions. Indeed, the Proposal of the *Bank* had set that Matter in a better Light, by finding two Millions might be given by them for the publick Service more than the *South-Sea* Company had offered: But still they were afraid, that as the *Bank* had made such a Discovery, so they might make a further; and should they advance four Millions on their second Proposal, as they now did, they should be still distanced by two Millions. To avoid the Loss of so desirable a Bargain, they still add, as a certain Indication that they had gone the farthest Lengths they could possible in the Service of the Publick; yet they had such a Zeal for its Service, they would serve them on the Terms any other Society should propose; only desiring, in return, that as they open'd this Matter before any other Society, so it might entitle them to the Preference.

When I considered that those Gentlemen had shewn such early Desires, and acted with such Probity and Candour, to ease the Nation of their Burden, I began to think what Reward the Gratitude of the Nation ought to decree them: for since they could not put their Bubble of Three and a Half Millions on the Nation, they now offered Seven Millions and a Half, and a greater Sum, if any other Society would give it: I say, when I considered this,

this, I shall leave to others what Reward ought to be decreed them in return of their Sincerity.

Who can enough lament the Misery of a Nation surrounded with such People, who wait for nothing but to prey on the Body of the Publick, which still is under a necessity of making use of them? And I cannot enough lament the publick Misfortune, in not letting the two Companies extend their publick Spirit; since I am entirely satisfy'd, had neither Proposal been closed with, the Nation would have had at least Ten Millions; and I must frankly own, I have no concern nor regard but for the Publick Good. And certainly Two and a Half Millions Capital, and One Hundred and Twenty-five Thousand Pounds Interest, added to the sinking Fund, would have been a glorious Article for the Publick.

But what is the most to be resented in this Affair, is the nature of the Proposal of the *South-Sea*; which tho more in Millions, yet being on such Conditions, may bring in less Money to the Publick, than the Proposal of the *Bank*: for by offering, as an Argument of their Sincerity, to bring in the Irredeemables, they lay themselves under a Penalty of one Year's Purchase; that is, of the Ninety-nine and Ninety-six Years, but not a word of the Thirty-two Years: So that by paying the Forfeiture, it will bring in but Four Millions Six Hundred Sixty-seven Thousand Seven Hundred and Five Pounds, instead of Seven Millions Five Hundred Sixty-seven Thousand Five Hundred Pounds proposed, and the Irredeemables not to be meddled with till the 1st of *March* Seventeen Hundred and Twenty one: so that the Nation until after the 1st of *March* Seventeen Hundred Twenty One, which is two Years, are tied up; and let any Society of Men whatsoever offer to relieve the Nation of the Burden of the Irredeemables, it's not in their power to agree, let it be ever so beneficial, until the expiration

piration of that time: so when these Gentlemen have got in the Harvest of the Redeemables, they will then, perhaps, think it worth while to treat with them. In the mean time, they have prevented any other Society from entering into a Treaty for easing the Burden of the Nation; and the Redeemables and Irredeemables being at Par almost as to the Debt, any other Society would have an equal Stock, the greatness of which would vye with theirs; and being perhaps in better Hands, sink theirs; which, supposing but *Five per Cent.* is One Million Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds, and they lose by the Penalty but Two and a Half *per Cent.* on their Stock, which is about that Sum.

I must own, there never was a Proposal so artfully made to deceive a Nation, by putting a Penalty, and declaring it was to manifest their sincere intentions, when it appears that it was put in to delude the Nation; for 'tis manifest, it's not their Interest to take in the said Annuities, since the taking them at any reasonable Price, must sink the Value of the Stock in a much greater proportion than the Penalty. And as Interest will never lye, so I think 'tis manifest it's not theirs to touch one Annuity at above the Par of the Redeemables.

To set the matter in a clear Light, the Redeemables with *Five and Four per Cent.* Interest, come to them at Par, but the Irredeemables must be bought. Now every Year's Purchase they give is so much loss to them, except about half a Year's Purchase, being the difference between Fifteen Millions Nine Hundred Thousand Pounds at Par, costing Four Millions; and Fifteen Millions and Fifty-seven Thousand Pounds costing Three Millions Five Hundred Sixty-seven Thousand Five Hundred Pounds; except in the Article of Fifteen Millions Nine Hundred Thousand Pounds there are Four Millions at

this, I shall leave to others what Reward ought to be decreed them in return of their Sincerity.

Who can enough lament the Misery of a Nation surrounded with such People, who wait for nothing but to prey on the Body of the Publick, which still is under a necessity of making use of them? And I cannot enough lament the publick Misfortune, in not letting the two Companies extend their publick Spirit; since I am entirely satisfy'd, had neither Proposal been closed with, the Nation would have had at least Ten Millions; and I must frankly own, I have no concern nor regard but for the Publick Good. And certainly Two and a Half Millions Capital, and One Hundred and Twenty-five Thousand Pounds Interest, added to the sinking Fund, would have been a glorious Article for the Publick.

But what is the most to be resented in this Affair, is the nature of the Proposal of the *South-Sea*; which tho more in Millions, yet being on such Conditions, may bring in less Money to the Publick, than the Proposal of the *Bank*: for by offering, as an Argument of their Sincerity, to bring in the Irredeemables, they lay themselves under a Penalty of one Year's Purchase; that is, of the Ninety-nine and Ninety-six Years, but not a word of the Thirty-two Years: So that by paying the Forfeiture, it will bring in but Four Millions Six Hundred Sixty-seven Thousand Seven Hundred and Five Pounds, instead of Seven Millions Five Hundred Sixty-seven Thousand Five Hundred Pounds proposed, and the Irredeemables not to be meddled with till the 1st of *March* Seventeen Hundred and Twenty one: so that the Nation until after the 1st of *March* Seventeen Hundred Twenty One, which is two Years, are tied up; and let any Society of Men whatsoever offer to relieve the Nation of the Burden of the Irredeemables, it's not in their power to agree, let it be ever so beneficial, until the expiration

piration of that time: so when these Gentlemen have got in the Harvest of the Redeemables, they will then, perhaps, think it worth while to treat with them. In the mean time, they have prevented any other Society from entering into a Treaty for easing the Burden of the Nation; and the Redeemables and Irredeemables being at Par almost as to the Debt, any other Society would have an equal Stock, the greatness of which would vye with theirs; and being perhaps in better Hands, sink theirs; which, supposing but Five *per Cent.* is One Million Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds, and they lose by the Penalty but Two and a Half *per Cent.* on their Stock, which is about that Sum.

I must own, there never was a Proposal so artfully made to deceive a Nation, by putting a Penalty, and declaring it was to manifest their sincere intentions, when it appears that it was put in to delude the Nation; for 'tis manifest, it's not not their Interest to take in the said Annuities, since the taking them at any reasonable Price, must sink the Value of the Stock in a much greater proportion than the Penalty. And as Interest will never lye, so I think 'tis manifest it's not theirs to touch one Annuity at above the Par of the Redeemables.

To set the matter in a clear Light, the Redeemables with Five and Four *per Cent.* Interest, come to them at Par, but the Irredeemables must be bought. Now every Year's Purchase they give is so much loss to them, except about half a Year's Purchase, being the difference between Fifteen Millions Nine Hundred Thousand Pounds at Par, costing Four Millions; and Fifteen Millions and Fifty-seven Thousand Pounds costing Three Millions Five Hundred Sixty-seven Thousand Five Hundred Pounds; except in the Article of Fifteen Millions Nine Hundred Thousand Pounds there are Four Millions at

Four *per Cent.* which makes some Alteration: but that was endeavour'd to be made up in their Demand annexed and signed to be added to their Capital, in the annual and principal Sums, where they demand One Million Five Hundred and Forty-four Thousand Pounds annual to be added; whereas only One Million Five Hundred Seven Thousand and Five Hundred Pounds is their Demand, when stated according to the Words of their Proposal.

The Proposal of the *Bank* was indeed but Five Millions Five Hundred Thousand Pounds; but as they offer Seventeen Hundred Pounds Stock to every Annuitant possess'd of a Hundred Pounds *per Annum* in the Annuities of Ninety-nine and Ninety-six Years, and in that Proportion to the Annuitants of Thirty-two Years, so in all probability the whole Sum would have come in. Whereas, by the Proposal of the *South-Sea*, they are sure but of Four Millions, and after two Years waiting, the Penalty of one Year's Purchase; and then the Government left to seek how to get themselves free from the Slavery of those Annuities, which perhaps they may not get off at Par, and so Three Millions Capital loss to the Nation, and One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds *per Ann.* Interest to be added to the sinking Funds. And I cannot but observe, that the *South-Sea* Proposal only offers the Year's Penalty on the long Annuities, but no Penalty on those of thirty-two Years; which, according to the way of calculating, that Four and a Half *per Cent.* will come to Three Millions Five Hundred Sixty-seven Thousand Five Hundred Pounds, is but One Hundred Twenty-one Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy Pounds Penalty they have excus'd themselves from; which I believe nobody has taken notice of, and is still a further Indication that they design not to meddle with one or the other.

But

But matters having come so far, and a Proposal being accepted, how far the Honour and Faith of the Nation is engaged, in all Events, to make good such an Agreement, ought to be consider'd, since a great many People have purchased at high Rates in the *South-Sea* on that Foundation; and if it should not be agreed to, that Stock would fall, to their great Loss, and People not trust the Publick Faith (as they understood it) again.

The Nation is certainly obliged to make good, with the greatest Regard, those Acts, as the only Foundation on which publick Credit can support itself, which ought to be sacred in all Events. But how far a Proposal agreed to binds the Legislature to pass it into an Act, is what I think deserves mature Consideration: For it's plain, that Questions agreed to in the Committee, and reported to the House and agreed to, have, at the committing the Bill, or at the third Reading, been thrown out: Even after having pass'd the House of Commons, they have been rejected by the Lords, without any Breach of the Publick Faith. Therefore the rejecting this Bill cannot be called a Breach of Publick Faith.

But it may be said, that People will lose by such a Resolution. But is it not their own Fault? Could they not have had a little Patience till the Act had been pass'd? Or must the Legislature be circumscrib'd by them? Or ought they to have any regard to Particulars, when it comes in competition with the publick Good? Which certainly is what is the business of every true Patriot to consider.

It will be asked; If you do not agree with the *South-Sea* Company, will you do nothing towards reducing the publick Debts?

I answer, Since the two Societies entering the Lists, they have shewn the Nation that the publick

Funds are a Prize worth the contending for, at the Price of Seven Millions and Half at least. This was a Discovery so lately made, that Three Millions was thought an extravagant Offer. Will not Time and good Management daily make further Discoveries and Improvements to the Nation's Advantage? Why should we now close and agree with the *South-Sea*, and put it out of our Power, at least for seven Years, to improve Matters for the publick Advantage?

The Peace of *Europe* seems in so near a view, that we may soon expect to feel the Blessings it will bring; and if on the Dawn of our Hopes (for neither that of *Spain* or the *North* is yet secure) we can have such Proposals, what may we expect to be offered at the next Sessions, when that Blessing shall be confirmed to us?

It may be argued, But supposing the happy View should meet with any unforeseen Event to ruffle the Prospect, would it not then have been happy had this Proposal been agreed to? I answer, No; because in such a case the *South-Sea* Company would have been disabled from complying with their Proposal. And since only Quiet can make any of these Proposals effectual, and the Publick must take under their Protection, and give all Assistance possible to such Society or Societies as shall undertake the publick Debts; I say, since this must be the case, will not the Proposal augment as the Quiet shall seem more confirm'd, and the Publick be in a better Capacity to support the Undertakers?

But supposing it may be thought necessary to reduce the publick Debts, since matters have gone so far, (not to throw cold Water on an Affair of such Consequence, and to do nothing this Year towards reducing the Debts) ought we to let the *South-Sea* Company have their Proposal confirmed, without having any Certainty that they will do
any

any thing to bring in the Irredeemables, and so let the Nation be frustrated of Three Millions they expected, and One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds *per Annum* to the sinking Fund ?

Since the *South-Sea* Company have pleaded a Merit, in being the first Proposers ; suppose, since they have the Redeemables, they should quit the Irredeemables to any other Society that would offer the same Terms of Three Millions and a Half, and they thereby be also quit of the Penalty of Six Hundred Sixty-seven Thousand Pounds: Surely they could not refuse such a Proposal ; or if they do, they must make such an Offer as to satisfy the Government they design to take them in.

Now, I no ways doubt but the *Bank* would greedily accept this Share in the publick Debts ; and tho they might not come to the same Encouragement of Seventeen Hundred Pounds Bank for every Hundred Pounds *per Annum* in the Annuities of Ninety-nine and Ninety-six Years, and the Thirty-two Years in proportion, yet they might come to give Fifteen Hundred Pounds Stock, and in proportion for the other Annuities, and pay for the publick Service Three Millions and a Half, with this Condition, That they submit in the Year Seventeen Hundred Twenty-seven to be equally reduced to Four *per Cent.* with the *South-Sea*, with this Proviso, That all Moneys arising on the sinking Fund towards the discharge of the publick Debts, be apply'd to pay off the Debt due to the *South-Sea* Company, and no part of the Fund of the *Bank* be paid off until the whole Debt of the *South-Sea* be discharged, in recompence for their taking this Bargain ; and that the Four Millions to be advanced by the *South-Sea* Company shall be paid in on their Fund, and the Three Millions Five Hundred Thousand Pounds on the Fund of the *Bank*, and the sinking Fund until the Year Seventeen Hundred and

and Twenty-seven, be equally appropriated to pay on each Fund in proportion to their Capitals, and then the sinking Fund be wholly appropriated to the charge of the Debt of the *South-Sea*.

This will make a sort of an Union or Coalition betwixt the two Societies, since they will be embarked in the same Interest, and will quell those Piques and Animosities, which I own I am apprehensive of.

And I cannot but own I am much rather for this Division, because I consider where Riches are, there will be Power ; and tho the *South-Sea* should make a reasonable Offer, so as to satisfy the Nation they will take in the Irredeemables, yet I wish still the Prey could be divided : For I think it's worthy the greatest Consideration whether forty two Millions, with two Millions one Hundred Thousand Pounds Income, should be lodg'd in the Hands of any one Society of People ; which in reality would transfer the Exchequer into the City. All I have said above is, in case it shall be resolved to go on upon the foot of these Proposals, tho I am satisfied it's not for the Interest of my Country to accept them, even with the Alternatives ; for it's my fix'd Opinion a Delay will give time, and be productive of more valuable Proposals for the publick Benefit.

The *South-Sea* Stock have the Load of eleven Millions and a half, the Bank of five Millions and a half, which must come in for an equal share of the Profit that shall arise by this Proposal. Now, if a new Society of People should rise, and offer to discharge the publick Debts, the Proportion would be equal to all the Subscribers in the Profits, and so certainly they can make a better Offer for the Publick.

I should not doubt but against next Sessions there would be an Offer of twelve Millions, which will be four Millions and a half more, and consequently two Hundred and twenty five Thousand Pounds
added

added to the sinking Fund: for these Proposals have laid things so open to the View of all Mankind, that Time must certainly produce new Schemes, and new Improvements.

If so many Bubbles can be set on foot for Millions and Millions, why may not a Scheme be form'd on so solid a Foundation as the Government's Security? Such a visible Fund will certainly have great Weight, and the reasonableness of the thing will bear its Weight, without any Tricks, or Stock-Jobbing to support it.

Having mentioned Stock-Jobbing, I shall just touch on the fatal Consequences I have always seen to attend so pernicious a Trade, in relation to the Publick: and tho it may be objected, that it's not a Time to make an Act to prohibit it, when the Nation is making a Bargain, to which that Trade may be propitious; I answer, I do not mean an Act to prevent buying and selling of Stocks, for the delivery in eight or ten Days; but I mean that Trade that is drove by the giving of Money for refusal, or the Putt of Stocks for stated times: for by these Bargains, it's in the power of a sett of Jobbers to raise or sink Stock as they please. For instance, when all their Money is distributed for the refusal, then is their time to advance Stocks, and when they are come to a certain height, demand the Stock: as soon as ever that is over, then to give out Money for the Putt of Stock; when having distributed what they think fit, then it's their Business to sink the Stock, and when they see their time, demand the Money for the Stock, or the Difference, and so keep things in a continual Fluctuation; for a settled Price is the destruction of the Jobbers. Now if nothing is sold but what is paid for, all their Tricks must end; and the true intrinsic Value of our Stocks needs no Tricks, their own Weight would carry them up, when no formed Desigas, by giving out
small

small Sums for time, can be carried on to depress them.

I have thus freely given you my Opinion of the State of our publick Debts at this Juncture, and shall no ways doubt but the true Interest of the Nation will be considered, and that those who are employed by their Country, will discharge it with that Integrity the Nation expects from them.



A Second Letter, &c.

S I R,

April 15. 1720.

OU desired formerly an Acconnt of what I thought of the Scheme which was going on, to pay the Debts of the Nation: I then told you my Opinion of that Affair, and that as the Parliament of *England* were then in possession of the Bill, so if it should happen to be rejected, what Improvements might be expected against another Session by Schemes for the getting a much more valuable one for the Nation.

But the Parliament not having thought fit to put off this matter, but to pass the Bill, that is now out of the Case, and all Projects for paying the National Debts, for seven Years, must be laid aside.

I could not then foresee the vast Advan^{ce} of *South-Sea* Stock; I did indeed think, that by Arts and Stock-Jobbing it might be run up to two Hundred Pounds: But three and four Hundred, and Money for the Refusal at five Hundred, nay a Thousand, were Notions I was not capable of. I could not for my Life find out how thirty one Millions at Five and Four *per Cent.* and the long Annuities to

to be purchased in at above *Par*, by being only transfer'd from the *Exchequer* to the *South-Sea*, should be worth three times the Money they were worth in the hands of the Government. This I found was a Mystery that Figures were incapable of demonstrating; it's an Arcanum that nothing but the Philosophers Stone can make out, by turning whatever they touch into Gold.

When the *Mississippi*-Stock run up in *France* to such an unaccountable height, how was it ridicul'd here! The talk was, what was their Fund? Why Three *per Cent.* What would their new Settlement be? What could they divide at twelve Hundred Pound? Five Shillings *per Cent.* Yet still they went on, and got up to eighteen Hundred and two Thousand, and at last *France* was forc'd to stop the Advance, for Reasons that will appear in the Sequel.

In *France* they were continually adding to their *Mississippi* Settlement: The first was the general Farm of the Tobacco; then the four great Farms, and afterwards the whole Revenue of *France*, and then the *East-India* Company. Then, to close up all, they joined the *Bank* to the *Mississippi*: And having abolished the use of Gold and Silver, and order'd that nothing should go in Payments but *Bank* Notes, they had got all the Revenue, all the Gold and Silver of *France* into their hands. And their Affairs were such an Arcanum, that the Wit of Man could not fathom: Their Dividends were to be nothing but Paper, which they may coin *ad Infinitum*: So that whether they made Profit or no, they could pay what Dividends they pleased.

But our *Mississippi* here is no more than so many Millions, with a Fund of Interest at Four and Five *per Cent.* as above, and for no more Continuance than seven Years; at which time they may be redeemed by some other Society, unless they come to new Terms, and pay a further Sum for their Continuation.

tinuation. Must it not be amazing then, to see the madness of People in being drawn into a Stock, which has but seven Years Continuance, and which every Man may see through!

But as if Stock-Jobbing was catching, and that Madness run in its turn from one Nation to another, that Disease is got amongst us, and running to the same height here; and we begin to approve of the same Scheme which we ridicul'd so much when at *Paris*: But being transmitted hither to *Exchange-Alley*, it is sanctified as reasonable, without the least regard to the fatal Effects it had there.

France found it self by the Advance of the Stock, got so far into Debt with Foreigners, that if they run up the Stock to three Thousand Pound, which it was thought it might advance to, the whole Cash of the Nation would not pay the Debt.

Their great Man *Mr. Law* saw, that until this fatal rise of Stock, *France* kept a Ballance in the *Exchange* of Twenty five to Thirty *per Cent.* above the *Par* of their Money; there was so little fear of her being exhausted, that Gold and Silver flowed into her Coffers. But when the fatal Project of *Mississippi* came to be run up to eighteen Hundred and two Thousand, those that had got such vast Estates, encrease their Expences, and occasion'd such a Demand for Diamonds, that *England* and *Holland* were exhausted to supply their Luxury; the Silver in *Paris* was hardly able to supply the Service of the upstart Families, which were arrived to such a height, that Edicts were made to hinder all Silversmiths and Goldsmiths working any piece of Plate of above the weight of five Ounces, and of Gold above an Ounce, and all Embroideries whatsoever. Yet all this could not stop the fatal Effects of *Mississippi*: For tho a great part of the exhausting arose from the Returns of Diamonds, yet that

Luxury

Luxury had its Original from the vast Estates got by the *Mississippi* Stock.

The first Symptom of the Misery which was coming on *France*, was the Fall of the *Exchange*, which in one Month fell from Twenty five *per Cent.* above *Par*, to Twenty five *per Cent.* under *Par*: then it was plain, their Ballance was gone, and that Specie must pay the Debt they owed to other Nations. In what a perplexity *France* was, any body may judge who considers that hardly a Post but brought some new Arret, and so contradictory one to the other, that it was plain they knew not which way to turn themselves, and that nothing but their absolute Power could have saved them from being reduced to Beggary: nay, it still hangs upon them; and tho they have made considerable Exports in Specie to pay their Debts, yet till they have paid their Ballance, they will never be at ease: For Arbitrary Measures may lessen their Debts, if a right use be made of that Power, but if not, the Debt will encrease.

France came at last to the necessity of prohibiting all Stock-Jobbing; and as they had a Power to make Bills *ad Infinitum*, which were to run as Money, so they set the Price at eighteen Hundred. If you wanted Stock, they took so many of their *Bank* Bills as the Stock at that price amounted to; if you wanted to sell Stock, they gave you so many Bills: So by that means they effectually hindred all Stock-Jobbing; for no body would buy for more, and no body would sell for less, when the Market was certain.

France did not part with so valuable a Project, without stipulating for the publick Advantage, and reserving the Sum of three Millions seven Hundred and Fifty thousand Pound *Sterl.* in that Stock, which they have now sold at eighteen Hundred *per Cent.* to

the Company for Sixty-seven Millions five Hundred Thousand Pound *Sterling*, so that *France* gets Sixty-three Millions seven Hundred and fifty thousand Pound *Sterl.* clear; and to ease the Company, she is to have Twenty two Millions five Hundred Thousand Pound paid in 1720. and then four Millions five Hundred Thousand Pound for ten Years together. Thus did their wise Ministry not part with such valuable Funds as the publick Revenues, without the Precaution of securing it self such a Sum by the advanced Price of Stock, as to make the Publick easy, and have a settled Fund of four Millions five Hundred Thousand *per annum* for ten Years, as a supply above the publick Funds, for any Exigency that may offer, or to be laid by against a Time when *France* may bid fairer than ever for the Universal Monarchy.

Notwithstanding the Reduction of their Money for stated Times, and that the *Lewis-d'Or*, that now goes at thirty six Livers, is the ^{20th of April} _{1st of May} to be reduced to Thirty Livers, when it will yield Twenty four Shillings *Sterling*, yet Bills of *Exchange* due after that Reduction are negotiated at seventeen and a half, which is but fourteen Shillings and seven Pence *Sterling*; so there is nine Shillings and Five-pence *Sterling* got on every *Lewis-d'Or* that can be imported, which is above Forty *per Cent.* This is their present Case; and since the same *Bank-Note* at Thirty six will pay at Thirty, there being no Specie, nothing but Paper, the *Exchange* do's not seem to be affected by the stated Diminutions: And until *France* has paid its Debts, and got a Ballance, their stated Diminutions can never affect the *Exchange*, since the same *Bank-Bill* is current after every Diminution.

Having thus related how Affairs stand with our Neighbour *France*, I shall now look into our own
at

at home, where we are copying after the same Scheme, which will have a much worse Effect, if our Neighbours push up our Inclinations with any supplies of Money. At present, the want of it seems to keep us in a little Temper; for had we but Materials, we seem ripe for doing what lately happen'd in *France*; and when we come to that Condition, we shall hardly submit to take Paper in all Payments, and abolish the use of Gold and Silver.

Having in my first Letter related a Visit I made to the two great Ladies, and things having far surpassed what I could imagine, I was resolv'd to make a second Visit, since several things had happen'd prosperous to the one, and sinister to the other.

When I entred the Gates of the Lady of the *South-Sea*, I observ'd a prodigious Joy in all the Servants, even to a Madness. I asked how went Stock? What you please, they answer'd, Money for the Refusal at Four Hundred and Five Hundred; nay One Thousand and Fifteen Hundred; any Price if you'll abate in the Premium. I asked how they came to be then at about Three Hundred and Twenty? They told me, there was some Management in keeping down the Price till things were current, for fear of too great an Alarm of the Nation's Danger; yet there was an Ingredient at present wanting, (all their Money being exhausted either in Premios, or the advanced Price) but they had a Million in view, which was coming to them, unask'd for; which when they had, they did not question to manage so dexterously, as to blow up their Stock as high as their Sister *Mississippi* in *France* had done; and would but her Neighbours help to push Matters on, as they had done in *France*, they did not question the same Success, to see their Country

Country in the same Condition, the useless Metals of Gold and Silver abolished, and instead of that, Paper more useful, without the trouble of counting: And to shew the World, that a Nation may be flourishing and rich without one Farthing left of that useless thing call'd Specie, if they had but a Sanction, they could coin Paper *ad Infinitum*, and lend it at Interest to supply all the Wants of their Country.

I then went forward to see her Ladyship, who was seated on her Throne; she looked very gloriously: In one place was now wrote, *Forty three Millions five Hundred Thousand Pounds; Two Millions one Hundred Thousand Pounds Income; Three Hundred and Twenty per Cent. and rising, as soon as she can get Money; Dividends of Fifteen, Twenty and Twenty-five per Cent. per Ann.* In another place, *At Three Hundred the Capital increased to One Hundred twenty-seven Millions five Hundred thousand Pounds.* In fine, there was nothing about her but Millions, and her chief Servants expecting the next Push of Stocks to alter their Names from Plumb-Men to Million-Men. In this Condition I saw her triumphing in her good Fortune.

I was extremely surprized to see the vast Concourse in her Apartments, all paying her the utmost Adoration, and desiring to be admitted Sharers in her Millions. I saw Blue and Green Ensigns of Distinction. At her Door stood Coaches, which having Supporters for the Arms, shewed the Dignity of those that attended. I also saw *Jews*, Stock-Jobbers, and Gamesters; nay, Ladies also were there; but, in respect to their Sex, I will make no Reflections. I saw a great many of all these Species, who not having Faith enough, had gathered in the Harvest before the benign Shower came, that (like Manna to the *Israelites*) rained on those that confided in her good Fortune: these indeed

deed could not hide their Grief and Despair for their ill Fortune.

As I had done before, so I now resolved to go see her disconsolate Sister, who formerly was owned as such, and out-rivalled by her in her greatest Glories; but now was as much despised, being sunk into the lowest degree of Contempt.

I found her seated, as before, melancholy and pensive, and all her old Servants about her, who could bring her no Comfort.

It was the 25th of *March*, when appeared a Fantom in a black Wig and Copper-colour'd Clothes, and denounced this melancholy Doom: *The 25th of March 1721. the Day of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, to be paid One Million Seven Hundred Seventy five Thousand Pounds: The Feast of St. Michael the Arch-Angel, the 29th of September 1721. to be paid Two Millions.* I found it was a good Angel, because he named the two Feasts, both which the Dæmons have in Abhorrence. And it's impossible to describe the Agony and Despair that appeared in all; the under Servants made dismal Lamentations, and the Vaults of Gold and Silver groaned that they must now change their Habitations.

I observed there was a sort of Jealousy, that some of her old Servants had betray'd her, being carried away by the Charms of a new Mistress, and had underhand secured themselves of a good Prize out of the new Project: And those People that were most suspected, made the greatest Protestations of their Innocence. But a little Devil appearing, pointed to two or three oldest as the Betrayers, and said, *Let them lye on, I shall have them very speedily: Chuse better Servants.* But alas! that Remedy is now of no moment, the Opportunity is lost, at least for seven Years, an Age!

There

There seemed some dawn of Hopes, by offering Five Millions to the Government at Three *per Cent.* by which, and their Banking, they might keep up a Dividend of Seven *per Cent. per Annum*, which would in all probability advance their Stock to Two Hundred. But when they came to look into their Sister's Bargain, they found that no Relief could be brought to this Nation till the seven Years were expired, she having wisely provided against any Reduction of the Debt, more than should enter on the sinking Fund. So that I left them in the utmost Despair;

It now follow'd in the Chain of Thought, in what an unhappy Condition my Country was, when her Funds were so tied down, as for seven Years to admit of no Relief. You will find in my first Letter, that I laid it down, That the Case was now so open to every body's View, that certainly we might, in another Session, see more advantageous Proposals for the Nation's Interest: And since till an Act was passed, the Faith of the Nation was not engaged, I was in hopes the Wisdom of the Nation would have put off the Agreement to another time: but having not thought fit to do it, it's the Duty of every Subject to acquiesce.

I shall now proceed to lay before you a State of our present Condition, and consider it in the Light of their taking in (that is, the *South-Sea*) all the Funds to enlarge their Capital, since they declare, unless they can compass that, their Scheme is imperfect: and if so, Interest will never lye. So I conclude they will be all taken in, and that the Stock is really worth Three Hundred Pounds; which, if you will allow the Directors to speak Truth, is a great deal too low, and would be terrible News to some thousands who have parted with Premios at Four and Five Hundred. And indeed,

indeed, if any Credit is given to the Dividends they pretend to make, it must be worth those Prices.

At 300 per Cent. 32 Millions

give advance

62,000,000

They are to pay the

Government 7,500,000

I suppose the An-

nuitants at 30

Years Purchase 7,500,000

15,000,000

So the advance to the private

Persons concerned in the

South-Sea Stock is 47,000,000

Thus the Publick have Seven Millions and a Half for mortgaging their Funds for seven Years, and the Private have Forty-seven Millions Gratuity for accepting the Mortgage. No doubt they richly deserve it, for the Prevarication I took notice of in my former Letter in their Proposals, when to shew their sincere Intentions, they offer'd Three Millions and a Half to ease the heavy Burden of the Nation's Debts.

I cannot but think if I had made a Bargain for Seven and a Half, for what should be found to be worth Fifty-four and a Half, Chancery would relieve me; at least I should think I had made a Bargain for my Principals (for I speak as a Factor) that I could not justify, especially if I had any Indications of it before I had fully compleated the Bargain.

I hear that the *South-Sea* Company Gentlemen, to enhance the Price of their Stock, secretly insinuate, that they shall buy the *African* and *India* Stocks; in fine, that they shall form a direct *Mississippi*. And indeed, they ape them hitherto pretty well.

D

What

What Man can foresee the dismal Consequences that may happen to this Nation from a Body of Men with Forty-three Millions and a Half Capital and an Income of above Two Millions yearly, and (as Money comes in on the sinking Fund) under no Restrictions to divide to the Proprietors? What may not Men do with such a Mass of Treasure? May they not give the Nation the greatest Convulsions they ever struggled with?

It's not the Directors that I apprehend; 'tis the whole aggregate Stock which composes such a Body of Men, as may reasonably put a Nation into the greatest Agonies: For whatever is their Interest will be in their Power; and whatever their Power can accomplish, their Interest will push them on to do.

Must not every true Lover of Liberty of his Country be under the greatest Concern, to see it under such Hazards, to be stock-jobb'd by a parcel of Men, who will have no regard to its Liberty, provided they can enrich themselves?

There being no Price fixed for the Annuitants, and it having been laid down that the Scheme of the *South-Sea* Company's Proposal will be imperfect without them, we may suppose the Possessor should think the Hundred Pound a Year for eighty Years, under the Sanction of an Act of Parliament, is better than any Proposal they shall make them, and so refuse to part with them:

I know it's talked, that if the Annuitants will not come in voluntarily, they shall be compelled in another Sessions. But who are the Persons that preach up this Doctrine? Why those that are concerned in the *South-Sea* Stock. For since they cannot compleat their Scheme without them, they will have them forced in. And this Breach of the Nation's Faith is contended for by those who have made it a great Argument, that the Faith of the Nation

Nation was engaged to the *South-Sea* Company, when the Proposal was only accepted; and that should that Bill not pass, who would ever make a Proposal again? But yet in their own Case they are for breaking into an Act of Parliament. So certain it is that Interest not only never lyes, but will prompt People to do every thing that is in their Power.

Now for whose Interest are we to break into the Act of Parliament; for the publick Interest, or the Private? It's true, it's the Publick's to get out of that Debt, by all means possible, since they have granted it for Terms of Years not redeemable by Parliament: But it's now the private Interest, since their Scheme is imperfect, unless they can bring them in. Let us therefore see how it stands as to the private Interest, and the Publick; and I will put it at Thirty Years to the Annuitants, and *South-Sea* Stock at Three Hundred: So for every Hundred Pound *per Annum* Annuity purchased, they stand thus; it creating Two Thousand Pound *South-Sea* Stock, is Six Thousand Pound.

To the Annuitant	3000 l.
To the Publick the <i>South-Sea</i> Company vouchsafe to contribute	450 l.
To themselves for their Services	2550 l.
The Total as by the Account above	6000 l.

Now is it not obvious to all Mankind, why this Doctrine of forcing them in is now preached up? The National Interest is not at all regarded, but an Interest that never lyes, to wit of those concerned in the *South-Sea* Stock.

How honest was the *Bank's* Proposal, who knowing on what Terms the Annuitants were, and that it was for the benefit of the Nation to bring them

in, they fairly propose to give them One Thousand seven Hundred Pound in their Stock? And as they were to pay three Years Purchase, and to increase but Two Thousand Pound Stock, so they could make no Advantage, but what that Three Hundred Pound Stock should sell for, by the advanced price of their Stock. So the Annuitants were to be embark'd in the same bottom, and participate of the Success of the Bargain. But say the other Gentlemen, we will fix no Price, but whatever Price we please to offer, you shall take it: If you are obstinate, we have the Millions on our side to force you.

Now I would appeal to any Man, whether it be common Justice, since the *South-Sea* Company give but four Years and a half, they ought not to give fifteen and a half Stock, as well as the *Bank* seventeen Hundred Stock, and three Years: If not, whether the Annuitants are not sacrificed to the *South-Sea* Company. And why the Annuitants under the Sanction of Parliament, should not have been as much the Nation's Care as the *South-Sea* Company, is hard to determine, unless we draw some Consequences we ought not, where nothing but the greatest Integrity should be expected.

I have supposed this Body of Men hitherto, but as a Capital of Forty three Millions and a half *Sterling*, and not considered them as a Body, who by the advance of their Stock to Three Hundred, make no less than a Fund of One Hundred and Thirty Millions *Sterling*: This Price, when they are engaged, they will be bound to support, and what numbers of Men must there be engaged in such a Sum? they will want the *African*, *Bank*, *India*-Stocks, the Revenue of *England*, and that all the Specie of *England* be brought into their Coffers, and they have an absolute Power to coin what Notes they please: they will not want the Will, because it will be their Interest; and they will not want

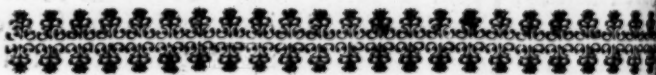
want the Power, which must be the Consequence of a Body of Men with a Hundred and Thirty Millions. And the difference betwixt us and *France* will be, we are a People asserting our Property, and they with one blast of their Monarch's breath are blown to Atoms, and their whole *Mississippi* Stock gone.

It may be said, there may be no occasion to encrease their Capital to such an Immense Sum as One Hundred and Thirty Millions: But to pay the Publick Debts, they must raise Thirty one Millions; to the Government Seven Millions and a half, to the Annuitants at thirty Years Purchase Seven Millions and a half: this is Forty six Millions; which with Eleven Millions and a half the Capital, will make their Capital Intrinsick, without any regard to the advanced Price, Fifty Seven Millions and a half.

But if they should demand no more than would just pay their Debts, how can they make such Dividends as are pretended to? for the Fifty seven Millions and a half Capital, can have but five *per Cent.* Interest on Forty two Millions and a half. It's easy to show what can be divided, therefore they must open Books at a certain Price, and by calling in ten or twenty *per Cent.* they will ingage the whole Sum, under Forfeiture to the Subscriber, who shall not answer the Call; which will sink them in a common Interest, as much as if they had subscribed the whole Sum; since the Price of the Subscriptions will rise or fall according to the Success this Body of Men will have in bearing down all before them, and carrying on new Designs.

The Landed Interest may have been fond of this Project, dazled with the Gains they have made: those that go on with them will be bound under the same tye as others, to maintain it; but those who fell in with them only for a present Profit, will

will have time at leisure to repent, when they feel the fatal Effects of it : For it will affect every part of the Constitution, and bring us to that Slavery we have contended against. And what is more, these very Millions that were raised to defend our Liberty, will be made subservient to destroy it; for from this Debt of the Nation contracted for the glorious Cause of Liberty and Property, now devolved into the hands of such a Body of Men concerned in the Joint-Stock, we may date the Ruin of this Nation, unless God Almighty is pleased by his Providence to save us.



The Third LETTER.

S I R,

Sept. 28. 1720.

 Bout six or seven Months since, I wrote you two Letters concerning the Affair transacted in the last Session of Parliament, when Proposals were before them, from the *South-Sea Company* and the *Bank*, for Payment of the National Debts.

I was then of opinion, no such Bill should pass, and gave my Reasons for it in my two former. Those Arguments are now proved to have been but too well founded; and happy had this poor Nation been, if the Bill had been thrown out when they divided 131 against it: at least, well satisfy'd may those Gentlemen be in their own Minds, who, from no other design but that of the publick Good, very vigorously oppos'd it.

It was impossible at that time to foresee all the fatal Consequences of such a Bill; only that as the *Stock* was running up, so it would surely end in the Calamity and Ruin of the Subject.

At the very last reading of the Bill it was still opposed; but by what Management I know not, there were then only 51 against it: Tho I could not but think one thing very hard, *viz.* To leave the long Annuitants to the arbitrary Mercy of such People.

We had before our Eyes the fatal *Mississippi* in *France*, where even arbitrary Power, with all the Helps it could give, was not able to save that Country from Ruin, by the exhausting their *Species*. We walked in the same Steps, and yet would not believe the same Consequences could reach us.

It began with the exhausting our Coin, and the fall of the Exchange, just as it did in *France*; for as Paper Credit extended, and our Coin diminished, it was easy to see our approaching Misery. But, as if the Nation would have been too soon alarm'd at this, it was so order'd, that in the *Bills of Entries*, the Article of *Gold exported* was omitted.

I saw indeed this Ruin must soon come upon us; but I own it came two Months sooner than I expected. I often said *November* would be the Month; and one of the *South-Sea* Directors, going to *Tunbridge*, sent me word, he was expecting that Time. But before he returned, it was come indeed, and I proved a true Prophet sooner than I thought.

Since the Scheme, on which this Project was formed, was own'd to have been laid before some that are in his Majesty's Service, it may perhaps be deemed but Justice to our Country to have this Scheme yet laid before the Parliament, (which was formerly proposed) that they might see the Basis
on

which 'twas formed, for answering the Project, and whether the pushing on the Subscriptions of 300, 400, and 1000 *l.* was in the Scheme or not. If this was not in the Scheme, should not a stop have been put to it in time? But if it was really a part of it ————— !

I confess, when the two Proposals were before the House of Commons, I was for agreeing with one of 'em; but was most inclined to the *Bank*, because they said plainly what they would give the Annuitants in Stock; and I thought that Bodies of Men not addicted to the scandalous Tricks of Stock-jobbing; neither, in my opinion, would their Stock have advanced to above 200, or 250 *per cent.* Had the *South-Sea* been limited in such a manner, the Nation had been safe.

When I was for such a Bill, I had this in view. That such a Sum of above Forty Millions, with above Two Millions Income, would have had such a Command of the Cash of the Nation, as must have sunk Interest to Two and a Half or Three *per cent.* and so the Value of the Stock, with an Interest of Five *per cent.* would have risen in proportion as the common Interest was lower'd; and then we should pay the Foreigners so much the less. But alas! this was not the Notion of our famous Projectors: 'twas too limited for their ambitious Thoughts, which were to make an Harvest of their Country.

'Tis well known, a Member of the House proposed a Bill to prevent Stock-jobbing, but that it was opposed: since which all sorts have run greedily to the Sport, till we have sported ourselves into Destruction.

Though in order to keep up the Price of their Stock, it was necessary to buoy up the People with huge Expectations, and any fallacious Amusement would do the work; yet I wonder with what

Project: Conscience towards God and their Country the
 Directors could promise to divide *Thirty per cent.*
 at *Christmas* next, and *Fifty per cent.* for twelve
 Years after, when they knew at the same time,
 that their yearly Income could not be *Three Mil-*
lions; and yet their Stock being *Thirty Millions*,
 the Dividend of *Fifty per cent.* would be *Fifteen*
Millions. Now, supposing their whole Subscrip-
 tions had stood, and been paid in, their Capital,
 and Money by Subscriptions, would have made
 out *Ninety Millions*, which on *Thirty Millions*
 Stock is but *300 per cent.* and upon this they
 could not not have paid above *Four per cent.* In-
 terest, how then could they divide *Five per cent.* at
 a Thousand?

This Project of theirs to advance the Stock to
 such an exorbitant height, was indeed a fatal two-
 edged Sword, that cut us every way: for by the
 advance of the Stock, we gave Foreigners both
 Opportunity and Temptation to draw out with
 such an Increase, as to drain us of our Mo-
 ney. On the other hand, if to save the Nation
 from that Mischief, we fall the Stock, then how
 many Purchasers at home, with their Families,
 are ruined; which is our present deplorable
 Case.

I will suppose that Foreigners had in the old
South-Sea Stock, and in the Annuities, &c. only
 Two Millions of the *Thirty Millions* of Stock;
 even this at a Thousand *per cent.* is *Twenty Mil-*
lions; and how could the Nation bear such a loss
 of Specie?

But let us suppose the Stock could truly be made
 intrinsically worth a Thousand Pounds, and that
 the Dividend of *Fifty per cent. per ann.* shall hold
 good for twelve Years; and that Foreigners be-
 ing well satisfy'd, will chuse to continue in; how

E

will

Con-

will matters stand then ? Truly not much better. But whereas for their Two Millions Capital at Five *per cent.* they formerly received One Hundred Thousand Pounds yearly, they will henceforth at Fifty *per cent.* receive a Million, which is Nine Hundred Thousand Pounds a Year more than usual, and this too for twelve Years ; and after all, these Foreigners would still have a demand of Twenty Millions Capital upon us when they pleased : Must not the Nation be undone by such an over-balance ?

In short, if to maintain the Stock at a Thousand Pounds there must be a Dividend of Fifty *per cent.* and if that must evidently have ruin'd the Nation, what will those miserable Politicians say for themselves, who for their own private Gain, have contrived and promoted this monstrous *Advance of the Stock*, to the manifest and speedy Desolation of their native Country ? He is a Traitor who attempts the Destruction of his Country by open Force ; and how much better is he that contrives it by deceitful and evil-designed Counsel ? Only *He* is a Traitor in the Arms and Bosom of his Country, and so acts more securely.

Yet as if the Price was not extravagant enough hitherto, even at a Thousand Pounds, I have been credibly informed, that some of the Directors have taken great Sums at Forty and Fifty *per cent.* to deliver Stock at six Months for Fifteen Hundred Pounds. Let any one judge what such a Contract, made by a Director, ought to be called, since he must know the State of the Company. Besides, if I mistake not, some of them act in another Capacity in another Place, where the Care of the People of *Britain* is their Duty, and they ought by no means to seek their Destruction.

It's fit to be observed also, that hitherto only the old Stock had been at Market ; and tho the *Long Annuitants* had Stock given 'em at Three Hundred Seventy-five, yet they took care to lock up their Stock, that they might have the Market to themselves.

As to the last Subscription of the *Redeemables* and *Annuitants*, I say little, taking it for granted, they will release them before the printing of this : else it will be the greatest Injustice that ever a Society was guilty of. The Proprietors of these Redeemables neither had any Terms propounded before, nor Option left 'em afterwards : tho'twas plainly upon the presumption of this *last*, (which had been granted to the others) that they had been drawn so hastily in, when the Stock was blown to an unreasonable Height, who might not be admitted while it was thought worth having, even at Four Hundred. No, then it was thought a Prize to come into the Subscription, and fit for none but the Managers, and their Friends, or such as could make their Court to them.

Once more : It may justly be enquired into, how the *South-Sea* Company could lend Four Hundred Pounds on One Hundred Pound Stock ; and whether at that time the Stock was truly worth Four Hundred Pounds ? If it really was so, then the People may be sure of that Sum still : But if that cannot be proved, and if a great part of that Money be lent to Directors themselves, and their Stock left in the Company's Hands, how will their Conduct appear to the World ?

To conclude : As I early foresaw the Ruin of my Country from this Project, so I have opposed it in all places, in publick and private. I was ridicul'd by a Great Man for standing in my own Light. I answer'd, I was discharging my Duty to

my Country. Among the Directors I had no Intimacy, but with two. One of 'em I saw often, and did all I could to persuade him to sell, and disqualify himself, that he might not have the destructive Consequences of such wild Schemes to answer for. The other avoided me; but yet I followed him with Letters to the same purpose, as will easily appear by his Answers, which follow.

Extracts of two Letters from a South-Sea Director.

S I R,

May 24. 1720.

“  Thank you for your Advice about the
 “ *South-Sea* Affair; but am resolved not
 “ to sell, nor quit; and am sorry you
 “ have had all along so wrong Notions, which
 “ have not only hurt yourself, but some of your
 “ Friends. I am of opinion our Stock will be
 “ higher, and remain so; and have no Fears on
 “ me; tho could wish it did not rise so fast.”

June 17. 1720.

“ I am fully convinced many *Novembers* will pass
 “ before any thing like what you say about my
 “ Brethren will happen; but your Passion and un-
 “ gentleman-like Language makes me forbear en-
 “ tring into the Dispute, desiring to continue our
 “ Friendship; so shall only say, That am more
 “ and more sure the *South-Sea* Stock will flourish;
 “ and he that does not sell yet, does best.”

Thus my honest freedom in opposing their Iniquity, is call'd *Passion*, and *Ungentleman-like Language*; and my telling him *November* would the fatal Month, is ridicul'd; and my foresight of this Evil has only met with the Fate of that Prophetess, to whom, 'tis said, the Gods granted the Gift of Prophecy, yet told her she should not be believed.

Tho this has been my Fate, yet I thank God when the Parliament shall meet, I hope to come into the House with the Peace of a good Conscience, for having honestly endeavour'd to save my dear Country from this foreseen, but dreadful Ruin. Nor yet am I so offended with this Disappointment, but I feel a generous Compassion towards so many undone Families, and should think it the greatest Happiness of my Life to contribute all I can to redress my ruin'd Country, and restore it to that happy Condition which (had my Advice prevail'd) it had enjoy'd.

F I N I S.

